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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT
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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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(Release on receipt)

SUBJECT: "Compost Now"...Information from Victory Garden Headquarters of the United States Department of Agriculture.

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The smell of burning leaves may be welcome to some people. To them...it means snappy, cold days ahead. Fall. But it's an odor that the true gardener does not like. Because burning leaves mean burning organic matter--organic matter that could be saved to make better gardens next year.

You see...dead leaves...as well as garden plants that have finished bearing..., weeds without seed on them...and any other organic matter you happen to get your hands on can be made into a compost pile. And compost spread over the garden in the spring makes for better soil composition. It helps hold moisture.

The gardening specialists of the United States Department of Agriculture say that now's a good time to start the compost pile for next year's garden. Experienced gardeners aren't burning or throwing away the plants they clean out of their gardens. Instead...they put the organic matter in the compost pile.

Here's the way they do it. Pick a corner of the garden you don't ordinarily use and spread down a layer of the organic matter. Make it from four to six inches thick. Put a couple of inches of soil on top of that...then another layer of the organic matter. Keep this up until you have a neat pile...flat topped and straight sided. But be sure it stays moist. Then let it rot.

You can add more organic matter during the fall as you collect it from cleaning up the garden and the lawn. Sometime during the winter...along about February ...perhaps you'll want to turn the pile. Cut off inch thick slices of it with a shovel and restack the mixture. This will cut the plant material into fine pieces and make it easier to use.

8-22-45 #

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